



[Paulo Freire, 1921-1997](#)

Pedagogy According to Paulo Freire

For the purpose of this set of texts called [Basics](#), designed for study circles without a lecturer, it helps to have an overt theory of “pedagogy” – a simple theory of learning and teaching – as a starting point.

The great 20th-century theoretician of liberation pedagogy was the Brazilian [Paulo Freire](#). It was Freire who gave us the word “conscientise”. It was Paulo Freire, more than any other, who showed how the bourgeois education system, with its “banking” theory of pedagogy (see today’s text, attached and/or downloadable via the link at the bottom of this document), is not well designed to educate, in the fullest sense, but rather tends to reproduce the class relations that suit the bourgeoisie.

Education, should by nature liberate the student, but is made

by the ruling class into a means of repression, said Freire.

How can we make sure that education is part of the building of socialism and communism? To ask such a question is to “problematise” education. To ask such a question is to begin a “dialogue” about education.

Freire thought that the political education of the oppressed, if it was not to be patronising and therefore counter-productive (because then it would reproduce and reinforce the oppressive bourgeois state), would have to be done by a new and different method.

In the dialogical method that Paulo Freire devised, and named the [Pedagogy of the Oppressed](#), or otherwise [Critical Pedagogy](#), there is no elementary, junior, senior, matriculation, undergraduate, post-graduate, doctorate or professor level. Teachers are learners and learners are teachers; yet all are free-willing “subjects”, having “agency”, and being capable of leadership.

As much as there may be a room and a gathering of individuals, each known by name, and a “codification” which is the text or other object to make the occasion, yet the dialogue admits no limits. The Freirean gathering is not sheltered.

It is one of the essentials of Freirean Pedagogy that we refuse the fiction of the sheltered classroom, and instead recognise that the oppressor is all around us and even within us, while we strive to liberate ourselves through our mutual, social,

pedagogical dialogue.

In Freirean practice, where no distinction is made between basic and advanced, all that we can do is to conduct a process of “problematizing”, beginning with education itself.

So, as a rule in all our (CU) courses, we use readings from original authors, and not derivative or secondary texts. In that spirit, the first of these chosen building blocks is the second chapter of Freire’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” (**attached**), here supplemented with a glossary of “critical pedagogy” terms. This text provides an opportunity to reflect upon what we are trying to do by learning and teaching.

You may ask: What is political education for?

For the late Freire, and for the Freireans of today, all education is a political act and a social act; an act of liberation and of self-liberation.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Pedagogy of the Oppressed, C2, plus Glossary and Political Education](#).
- A PDF file of the reading text is attached
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).